

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD  
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

Property Address:	<b>1514 8<sup>th</sup> Street NW</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>Shaw Historic District</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent Calendar
ANC:	<b>6E</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Denial Calendar
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept Review
		<input type="checkbox"/> Permit
Meeting Date:	<b>September 18, 2014</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	<b>#14-621</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Brendan Meyer</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

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The applicant, contract purchaser Lock 7 Development, seeks approval of a concept design for alterations and rooftop addition to 1514 8<sup>th</sup> Street NW, a non-contributing three-story brick apartment building in the Shaw Historic District. Plans were prepared by Square 134 Architects.

**Property Description and Context**

This block is typical of the Shaw Historic District in exhibiting a variety of building forms from multiple overlapping phases of development. Rowhouses on the block were mostly built individually and in pairs, but two large groups of rowhouses stand at the north end. Building heights and proportions vary widely from short and diminutive 2-story frame houses that date to the Civil War, to grandly proportioned 3-story rowhouses decorated with ornately detailed millwork bays and cornices.

1514 8<sup>th</sup> Street is a three story brick apartment building built in 1956. Although three stories, its height is roughly equal to the two-story projecting bay rowhouse to its south, and it is significantly overshadowed by the three-story rowhouse to its north. While generally non-descript it shows some design characteristics typical of post-World War II walk-up apartment buildings, including an economic lack of ornament, concrete window frames, and an off-center entrance that combines brick, stone, metal and a deeply inset doorway to produce the only noteworthy architectural effect. Based on its date of construction, it is non-contributing to the historic district, whose period of significance extends from 1833-1932.

**Project Summary**

The project calls for alterations to the front façade and a rooftop addition setback from the front and rear façades. The south bay of windows from ground to roof will be expanded in height and width to accommodate French doors meant to access shallow balconies 2'-0" deep. The windows in the north bay will be widened to match the windows in the center bay and new metal casement windows will replace the non-original double-hung sashes. The entrance will be expanded to include an exterior entrance to a new basement story. The rooftop addition will be brick and aligned with the height of the adjacent rowhouse. Its setbacks—12 feet from the front and 16 feet from the rear--will provide for outdoor deck space, the railings of which will be setback from the front parapet.

### **Evaluation and Recommendation**

Alterations and additions to non-contributing buildings are generally afforded greater flexibility when considering their compatibility. Preserving the integrity of the building is not at stake, but alterations should be compatible with the general pattern or architecture of the historic district as a whole. For example, preservation regulations advise that window replacement on non-contributing buildings should not discourage good contemporary design or creative architectural expression (DCMR10, Section 2310). In this sense, the alterations to 1514 8<sup>th</sup> Street are minor and not incompatible with the historic district. The proposed window sizes are more similar to the proportion of historic windows than the current windows. The new balconies and basement entrance make use of cable-stay railings so that they are visually unobtrusive and dimensionally they project no farther from the front façade than either adjacent projecting bay. Since the building does not have a watertable or otherwise emphasized base, the new basement entrance does not divorce the building from grade which is often the problem where a historic building rests on an architectural distinctive base. The areaway stair is also tucked tight to the building face, will not be prominently visible from the sidewalk, and will not result in substantial removal or paving of the public space front yard.

The roof addition, though slightly visible from the street, is not out of place on a post-World War II building where elevator service was an increasingly affordable amenity. The new rooftop addition is also not incompatible with the historic district because it will be clad in brick to match the lower stories and its height will not be more than the neighboring rowhouse to the north.

### **Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends that the Review Board find the concept for these alterations and a rooftop addition setback from the front and rear at 1514 8<sup>th</sup> Street NW to be compatible with the character of the historic district, consistent with the purpose of the preservation act, and that final approval be delegated to Staff.*